

The future in the past

The **future in the past** is used to describe a future event from the perspective of a past moment. It is often used in narratives to express plans, predictions, or expectations that were in the future at that past time.

Common Structures in English:

1. **"Would" + base verb** (the past of "will")
 - *He said he **would call** me later.*
 - French: *Il a dit qu'il **m'appellerait** plus tard.* (Conditional present)
2. **"Was/were going to" + base verb** (for planned or intended actions)
 - *She told me she **was going to travel** to Spain.*
 - French: *Elle m'a dit qu'elle **allait voyager** en Espagne.* (Imparfait + infinitive)
3. **"Was/were about to" + base verb** (for imminent actions)
 - *They **were about to leave** when the phone rang.*
 - French: *Ils **allaient partir** quand le téléphone a sonné.*
4. **Past Continuous (for planned events, often with a time reference)**
 - *I **was meeting** her at 5 PM.*
 - French: *Je **devais la rencontrer** à 17h.* (Imparfait / "devoir" in past)

More Examples:

English (Future in the Past)

French Equivalent

*I knew you **would succeed**.*

*Je savais que tu **réussirais**.*

*He thought it **was going to rain**.*

*Il pensait qu'il **allait pleuvoir**.*

*They promised they **would help** us.*

*Ils ont promis qu'ils **nous aideraient**.*

*She **was going to study** medicine.*

*Elle **allait étudier** la médecine.*

Key Difference:

- In English, "would" and "was going to" are common.
- In French, the **conditional present** (for "would") or **imparfait + aller** (for "was going to") are used.